



Diocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Bishop

January 21, 2003

Mr. John LaBonte

[REDACTED]
Houston, Texas [REDACTED]

Personal and Confidential

Dear John:

It is with deep personal concern for you and a profound sorrow for the pain and suffering you have endured that I write to you. I know that Sr. Maureen O'Connell, diocesan Victim's Assistant Coordinator, has already spoken with you, but I want to offer to you my personal words of sorrow and support.

I, and those who assist me in the investigation of allegations of sexual misconduct of minors by clergy, have taken extremely seriously your accusation against Father John Keller. The members of the Special Panel that met with you and Father Keller, as well as the Diocesan Review Board, have been as attentive as they can to attempt to determine the facts of the case and to recommend the most appropriate resolution.

John, as Sr. Maureen has stated to you, Father Keller's recollection of the events of the 1983 night in the cabin differ from those that you recall. Father Keller has acknowledged that he crossed a proper boundary by holding you in a manner inappropriate for a priest. However, he denies any sexual intent or abuse in his conduct with you. The Special Panel listened attentively to both you and Fr. Keller. They asked questions with the desire to understand as fully as possible the authentic facts. Their own assessment was that they could not determine that the abuse did occur, nor could they prove that it did not occur. The Review Board had the same difficult task. After much discussion the Diocesan Review Board was unanimous that in holding you, Father Keller had acted very inappropriately, but the majority of the members could not conclude that any additional acts occurred that would have constituted sexual abuse.

Each member of the Diocesan Review Board expressed his or her concern for you and the Board was unanimous in recommending that the Diocese provide you with counseling to assist you in your process of healing. I know that Sr. Maureen has already expressed to you the Diocese's willingness to provide you and your wife counseling. I want to personally offer counseling to you and your wife. Sr. Maureen will gladly assist you in this regard and, of course, the Diocese will assume the costs.